



Bay Delta Conservation Plan Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement Process

What is the Purpose of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan?

The BDCP is being developed by a diverse Steering Committee which includes the specific water agencies and Mirant Delta who divert or benefit from water diverted from the Delta, State and federal fishery agencies, and interested stakeholders to provide for the conservation of at-risk fish species within the context of broad habitat conservation principles. The work is being done under the guidelines for the federal Habitat Conservation Planning (HCP) process and the State Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) process. The purpose of this process is to provide stable regulatory coverage for specific at-risk fish species under the State and federal endangered species acts to the water users who participate in the BDCP.

The BDCP will:

- Identify and implement conservation strategies to improve the overall ecological health of the Delta
- Identify and implement ecologically-friendly ways to move fresh water through and around the Delta
- Identify and implement actions to address other stressors
- Provide a framework to implement the plan over time

Why is an EIR/EIS being written?

The Conservation Plan will call for physical changes in the Delta that will require the approval of the federal and state fish and wildlife agencies. To provide these approvals, the agencies will need to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act (NEPA/CEQA) by preparing an EIR/EIS. The EIR/EIS will evaluate the environmental effects of the conservation plan to help determine if the plan will accomplish the intended goals and identify potential mitigation measures.

What is the purpose of the scoping meetings?

Scoping meetings are the initial step of the EIR/EIS process. The objective of the BDCP is to create a plan to provide for the conservation of certain listed species in the Bay-Delta region. The EIR/EIS will evaluate alternative approaches for accomplishing these goals that should be considered by the federal and state agencies. The purpose of the scoping meetings is to receive initial comments from the public on what alternatives should be identified and evaluated in the BDCP EIR/EIS and potential environmental impacts that need to be addressed.

What should I expect to be done with my comments?

Your comments and suggestions will be reviewed by the BDCP EIR/EIS proponents and will be addressed in the scoping report. Your comments will be reiterated in the document and a description of how the comment is being addressed will follow.

What is the schedule of the EIR/EIS?

The public scoping phase of the process is expected to be completed by June 2008. A draft EIR/EIS will be available in late-2009 for public review and comment.

How do I get involved?

Give us your comments. We are looking for conservation projects within the Bay Delta Ecosystem that will help conserve native species. By submitting comments and your name and address you will be included in the public outreach list for the BDCP EIR/EIS. As the documentation starts to be developed, we will mail out regular newsletters to keep the public apprised of the progress. Please visit our website: http://baydeltaoffice.water.ca.gov/sdb/bdcp/index_bdcp.cfm for more information.

Why do I hear an aqueduct is being proposed as a conservation measure?

State and federal fish and wildlife agency biologists have long believed that separating the water conveyance functions of the Delta would contribute significantly to helping restore Delta fish populations. An aqueduct would do this. Also, if the project is designed properly, using state-of-the-art fish facilities, it could also improve conditions for the Sacramento and San Joaquin River salmon and steelhead.

How did you come up with these four options?

These options were developed as a minimum complement of alternatives the Governor has asked us to evaluate. Along with these options, the Bay Delta Conservation Plan Steering Committee will develop full alternatives and we expect to include alternatives suggested by the public. The intent of the environmental document is to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives in this process.